



Windows to Wildlife



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In This Issue . . .

West Nile Virus Page 1

New Book Page 2

Migratory Bird Day Page 3

Centennial Celebration Page 4

Thank You Page 5

Events Page 6

The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee is comprised of the following agencies and organizations:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation

Idaho Audubon Council

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Idaho Department of Commerce

Idaho Department of Transportation

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

West Nile Virus Prevention

by Lauri Hanauska-Brown, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Upper Snake Region

We have certainly heard a lot about the latest wildlife-human disease, West Nile Virus (WNV.) During this past year, the virus has been publicized on television and radio as it's moved steadily across the country. It first appeared in New York City in 1999 and by the end of 2002, 44 states reported cases of the disease in birds, people, or horses.

West Nile Virus is carried by birds and spread by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes transmit the virus between infected birds and can transmit the disease to other species of animals, including people. There is no documented evidence of the virus being transmitted from person-to-person or animal-to-person.

In humans, the virus can cause a mild illness with flu like symptoms, or a more serious illness called West Nile encephalitis. The more severe form of the disease results in swelling of the brain and membranes surrounding it. More than 200 people have died in the U.S. from West Nile encephalitis.

West Nile Virus has also become a 'hot' topic for wildlife managers. Wildlife researchers are just beginning to study the virus's true impact on wildlife populations. Currently, 150 species of birds, 14 mammals and 1 amphibian are reported as having West Nile Virus. It appears that while animals become ill from the virus, many of them survive. Corvids and raptors are the exceptions.

The corvid family of birds – crows, ravens, magpies, jays – appear to be the most vulnerable to the virus. In fact, dead birds are a sign that West Nile Virus is active in an area. Raptors also have a high mortality rate when infected with the virus.

Surveillance for WNV in Idaho is being done jointly between the Department of Idaho Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare and the Department of Agriculture. Based on other states' experiences, corvids and raptors are the 'canary in the mine' and will likely be the first indications the disease has arrived. Because of this, dead corvids and raptors are being accepted for WNV testing by state Health District offices and IDFG's Wildlife Health Lab. The Center for Disease Control does however caution all people handling sick or dead animals to always wear gloves.

What about the mosquitoes? Experts maintain that the chance of becoming infected and seriously ill from a mosquito bite is extremely low, even in areas where the virus is known to be circulating. But as the main carrier of the disease and as the carrier that can infect people and animals, much discussion currently surrounds the need for mosquito control.

Photo above: Wearing mosquito repellent can reduce the chances of contracting West Nile Virus.

MOSQUITOS

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) encourages people to be proactive in protecting themselves by reducing their exposure to mosquitoes. First, find and eliminate standing water around ones home because it is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The CDC also recommends using insect repellent, avoid areas of high mosquito infestation, and repair windows and screens to keep mosquitoes out of homes. If someone owns a horse, veterinarians across the country strongly recommend they be vaccinated against WNV.

A standard response in many communities has been chemical abatement programs, especially in the eastern U.S. However, some unique alternatives to controlling mosquito populations are also being discussed, such as the mosquito-eating fish *Gambusia spp.* It's being looked at as an option for controlling mosquitoes in irrigation canals and ditches.

Here's another option, one not endorsed by CDC, yet. Why not put up a bat house? One little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) can eat up to 1200 mosquito-sized insects in an

hour! Imagine what these mosquitoes eating machines could do around your home.

Remember, bats are not blind, they do not get tangled in hair, nor do they suck human blood and less than 0.05% of bats carry rabies.

While proper handling of dead bats is a must, attracting bats to live on your property is a great idea. Bat Conservation International, Inc. has lots of information on some bat house designs you can build yourself.

Bat Conservation International, Inc. is also a great source of information on rabies, bats, and pest management. Check out their web site at: <http://www.batcon.org>.

Will Idaho see cases of West Nile Virus in Idaho this spring? Time will tell, but the rapid westward, multi-species spread of the virus speaks for itself. In the meantime, maybe some natural mosquito control is in order.

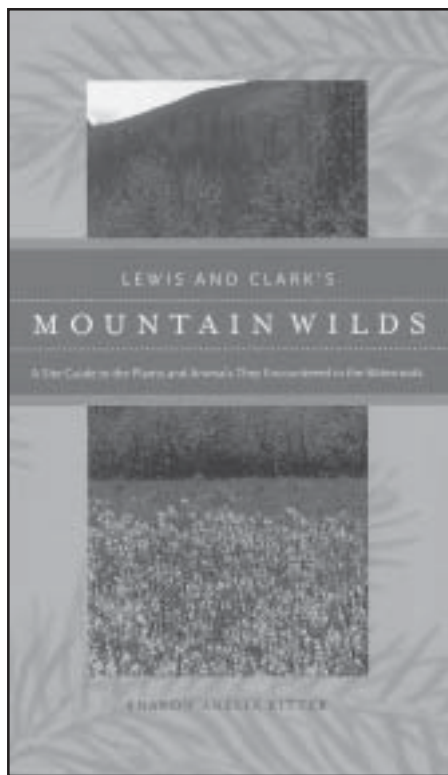
For more information on WNV, visit the Center for Disease Control WNV site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>.

Experiencing Lewis & Clark's Idaho

Imagine what Idaho must have been like 200 years ago. Fortunately, there are still places where you can envision what Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery saw as they traveled twice through Idaho. In Lewis and Clark's Mountain Wilds: A Site Guide to the Plants and Animals They Encountered in the Bitterroots, author Sharon Ritter helps you appreciate the natural history of the Lewis and Clark Trail between Lolo, MT and Lewiston, ID. Ritter became familiar with the area when she worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the University of Idaho between 1993 and 2001. In the book, published in the Fall of 2002 by the University of Idaho Press, Ritter selects two dozen sites along Highway 12 and the Lolo Motorway. She lists the viewable plants and animals that Lewis and Clark recorded on their expedition. Using interpretive accounts and quotes from the explorers' journals, Ritter reveals the natural history of the area, tied into the history of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Lengthier essays throughout the book go into more detail about subjects relating to the natural history and human history of the area.

The book is beautifully designed and illustrated with color photographs of plants and animals. It recently won a national achievement award from the Association of American University Presses. Funding for the book came from the Idaho Scenic Byways Program, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and University of Idaho Press. Sharon Ritter can be contacted at the Bitterroot National Forest, sritter@fs.fed.us, 406/363-7115.

Sharon Ritter (center) receives Idaho's Nongame Montage for her years of work in Idaho. Retired Idaho Nongame Manager Wayne Melquist (right), Forest Service Biologist Dan Davis (left).



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY—MAY 10, 2003

IMBD was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Now under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird — its journey between its summer and winter homes. It is celebrated through bird festivals, bird walks, and education programs. We invite you to join us in this important celebration.

Bonniers Ferry

May 10, 2003

Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, 208/267-3888,
<http://kootenai.fws.gov/>

Coeur d'Alene

May 10, 2003

The Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society will celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with an educational table set up in City Park, weather permitting. Volunteers will be on hand to point out migratory birds and discuss the conservation issues that result from the birds' long-distance lifestyles.

Contact: Lisa Hardy, basalt@earthlink.net, 208/682-4808.

Moscow

May 10, 2003

At Friendship Square in Downtown Moscow, IMBD recognizes some of the ways in which birds have stimulated people to become involved in conservation and encourages individuals, corporations, and organizations to be a part of continuing efforts to protect birds. Don't miss this opportunity to find out how you can introduce others to the wonder of birds and help ensure that they will always be a part of our future.

Contact: Rita Dixon, Clearwater Region Fish and Game Office, 208/799-5010.

Salmon

May 10, 2003

In Salmon, a celebration of birds will be held at the Sacagawea Interpretive Center from 8am until noon. Participants will begin their morning with up-close looks at songbirds during a bird banding demonstration. The how's and why's of bird banding will be explained as participants observe the banding process. You can take a bird walk around the interpretive center grounds and learn about the importance of field marks and song to making positive identifications. The morning will wind up by assembling a bluebird box to take home. Contact: Vicky Runnoe or Beth Waterbury, Salmon Region Fish and Game Office, 208/756-2271.

Upper Snake Region

May 17, 2003

Upper Snake will have an information booth set up at the Sandy Marsh parking lot on the Market Lake WMA and offer guided bird tours. The days activities will be led by Snake River Audubon Society members. Contact: Lauri Hanauska-Brown Upper Snake Fish and Game Office, 208/525-7290.

Pocatello

May 10, 2003

Pocatello Zoo, Contact Kathi Stopher, 208/237-6617 or kathi_stopher@fws.gov



Living with Bats booth at the county fairs in north Idaho. Jenny Taylor.

LIVING WITH BATS

By Jenny Taylor, Wildlife Biologist, Idaho Panhandle National Forest

Whether we know it or not, we're all living with bats. Bats are nature's free insect control. Every night 14 species of bats protect Idaho's forests, rangelands and gardens by devouring thousands of moths, termites, beetles and mosquitos.

Thanks to several grants, North Idaho residents are becoming much more aware of these helpful animals. Idaho Department of Fish and Game, National Wildlife Federation, Forest Steel, JBP Company, Diedrich Manufacturing, and the Capn's Table all chipped in to fund bat education programs in the Idaho Panhandle. Last year, wildlife biologist Jenny Taylor presented bat slide programs in Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene, and at Farragut and Old Mission State Parks. The truly curious bat aficionados turned out

for 4 field trips to watch bats foraging at dusk. Bat information booths at the North Idaho Fair in Coeur d'Alene and Bonner County Fair in Sandpoint were very popular. Look for upcoming bat events at the Earth Day Fair at North Idaho College and at Coeur d'Alenes' Old Mission State Park.

If you live near a Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone or Benewah County library, come see the bat books and pamphlets they received recently. All the public schools in these 5 counties (and some in Latah County) also received information about Idaho's bats, their habitats, biology, and management. Posters, books, and brochures are still available from the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and Idaho Department of Fish and Game offices in Coeur d'Alene. Bat trunks are available for loan from Watchable Wildlife Specialist Beth Paragamian (208/765-7409) or the East Bonner County Library (208/263-6930). Each trunk contains videos and various bat-related activities for all ages.

Join the Celebration: The National Wildlife Refuge System Celebrates a Century of Conservation

by Susan Kain, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

President Teddy Roosevelt began a century of wildlife conservation on March 14, 1903 when he established the first National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) at Pelican Island in Florida. Since its beginning, the National Wildlife Refuge System has grown to include 540 refuges and thousands of Waterfowl Production Areas. This 95-million acre network of lands and waters protects many of America's—and the world's—most wild and scenic places, and provides habitat for an amazing variety of wildlife.

Idahoans are invited to help celebrate the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System by visiting one of Idaho's six National Wildlife Refuges: Kootenai in northern Idaho, Deer Flat in southwest Idaho, and Minidoka, Camas, Grays Lake, and Bear Lake in southeast Idaho. Come any day to watch wildlife, or visit during one of this year's special Centennial Celebrations. For more information about upcoming Centennial events, or about visiting an Idaho refuge, contact the refuge or visit <http://pacific.fws.gov/refuges/>.



Wintering waterfowl on Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife Service.

National Wildlife Refuge Events

Saturday May 3, 2003

Centennial All-access Dock Dedication

Deer Flat NWR, Nampa (208) 467-9278

<http://deerflat.fws.gov/>

Help the refuge dedicate its new, disabled-accessible fishing dock at Lake Lowell. The celebration will include a variety of wildlife-related activities.

Saturday May 10, 2003

International Migratory Bird Day

Kootenai NWR, Bonners Ferry (208) 267-3888

<http://kootenai.fws.gov/>

Saturday, May 17, 2003

Centennial Celebration Open House and Dedication of Interpretive Auto Tour Route

Camas NWR, Hamer (208) 662-5423

<http://camas.fws.gov/>

contact Kathi Stopher,
at 208-237-6617 or kathi_stopher@fws.gov

Saturday May 31, 2003

Renovation Celebration at the Refuge Environmental Education Building

Deer Flat NWR, Nampa (208) 467-9278

<http://deerflat.fws.gov/>

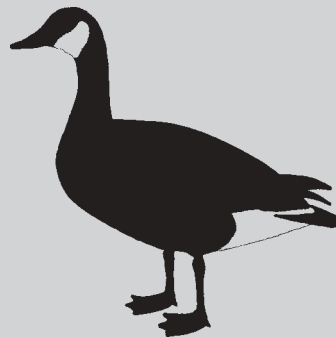
Come celebrate the re-opening of the newly-renovated Environmental Education Building at Lake Lowell.

Saturday August 2, 2003

Centennial Celebration

Kootenai NWR, Bonners Ferry (208) 267-3888

<http://kootenai.fws.gov/>



THANK YOU

Thank You to All Contributors

Our sincere thanks go to all supporters of the Nongame Program, financially or otherwise. Without your contributions, the Nongame Program could not conduct critical research, hold wildlife viewing events, or publish this newsletter. The following people made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of their tax checkoff donation. These lists represent only newsletter subscribers who have returned a subscription form between December 1, 2002–Feb 28, 2003, and marked the contributor box. Many subscribers not listed here have contributed generously and Idaho's nongame wildlife thanks all of you.

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OTHER EVENTS

Women in the Outdoors

Saturday, June 14, 2003

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
5657 Warmsprings Ave
Boise, ID 83716

The National Turkey Federation sponsors this workshop for women who enjoy the outdoors, and want to learn more about it. Many different workshops are available throughout the day including flyfishing, outdoor cooking, hunting, shooting, archery, birdwatching, horses, backpacking, and much more. Registration required. Contact Kathryn Hampton, 208/334-4199.

Loon Program

Thursday, May 22, 6:30 p.m.

Post Falls Public Library
821 N. Spokane St., Post Falls

A slide program and activities for the whole family will feature one of Idaho's most beautiful and rare birds, the common loon.

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BLESSING

Just can't believe the sights –
the sweetness of the plains,
mountain top clarity,
weaving river water,
cloud puffs that I fly through,
falling rain, sun, the wind,
sounds of breathing, heart beats
measuring life's length –
as I peer from within
the soul and through the eye
of our honored Eagle.

*By Ron Daugherty
Windows to Wildlife Subscriber
Pocatello, Idaho
rondaugherty@earthlink.net*



recycled  paper

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